International Journal of Communication 18(2024), 3668-3687 1932–8036/20240005

"Today's Children, Tomorrow's Mujahideen": A Discourse-Theoretical Analysis of the Militarist Discourse in a Turkish Cypriot Children's Magazine

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This research offers a discourse-theoretical analysis of the construction of the militarist discourse in Turkish Cypriot children's magazines, with a specific focus on the magazine *Tuncer*. The selected data for analysis consist of 14 issues published between January 1967 and December 1968. The chosen period is deliberate, aligning with crucial turning points in the Cyprus Problem, marked by heightened collective violence. To better understand the articulation of the militarist discourse within these issues of *Tuncer*, a theoretical model is developed drawing on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. The militarist discourse is seen to have 4 nodal points: (1) the army as a national protection assemblage, (2) obligated citizenship, (3) the sanctity of sacrifice, and (4) the need for the destruction of the enemy. The analysis demonstrates the presence of all 4 nodal points, with particular emphasis on the strength of the army as a national protection assemblage and the need for the destruction of the enemy. Furthermore, the contextualization within the Cyprus Problem unveils internal conflations, highlighting the deeply political nature of the militarist discourse.

Keywords: militarism, children's magazines, discourse theory, childhood, Cyprus Problem

Starting from the early 20th century, Cyprus witnessed armed conflicts that escalated in the 1950s and became more prominent in the following decades, eventually resulting in a series of external military operations and the island's division. These violent confrontations profoundly influenced Cypriot society. Childhood has inevitably intersected with conflict in myriad ways in this context, where there are attempts to align childhood with the discursive constructions of the self and the other, and armed conflicts render several subject positions, of which the two most dominant are hapless victims and militarized children.

This article analyzes the construction of the militarist discourse in Turkish Cypriot children's magazines to understand how childhood is incited, suppressed, and molded to embrace militarism and war within the context of the Cyprus Problem. This research focuses on a particular magazine, *Tuncer*, published in Cyprus from December 1965 to November 1970, when armed conflicts gradually escalated and left their

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Date submitted: 2023-07-31

[1] This research was supported by the Charles University Grant Agency (No. 167524).

mark on the social body. The selected data comprise 14 issues published between January 1967 and December 1968. This period has been chosen purposefully as it marks several crucial turning points in the Cyprus Problem as well as significant "external" developments, especially in Greece and Turkey.

To analyze how the militarist discourse was articulated in the selected children's magazine, a discourse-theoretical model was first developed with the support of Laclau and Mouffe's (2014) discourse theory (DT), which provides the theoretical backbone of this research. For the analysis, this research employs an analytical variant of DT, the discourse-theoretical analysis (DTA; Carpentier & De Cleen, 2007), strengthened by multimodal analysis techniques and a discourse-theoretical rereading of theories on militarism.

Methodologically, this research takes a retroductive (Glynos & Howarth, 2007) approach consisting of several iterations between the theoretical framework and empirical analysis, developed cyclically and cross-fertilizing each other. Thus, the theoretical framework has been developed synchronously with the empirical analysis without the theory being imposed on the analysis; however, for practical reasons, this article sketches the theoretical components first and then reports on the analysis. Before moving on to the theoretical discussion, a brief historical background of the Cyprus Problem is required, as this study is embedded within this context.

Contextual Background: The Cyprus Problem

The history of Cyprus has been shaped by centuries of regional power struggles (Crawshaw, 2022). Cyprus came under Ottoman rule in 1570/1571 (Keefe & Solsten, 1993), during which there was an influx of immigrants from Anatolia forming the nucleus of the (Turkish) Muslim Cypriot community (Jennings, 1993). Although the islands' two major communities, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, have never truly socially integrated, they coexisted peacefully until the bicommunal relations embarked on a persistent deterioration with the Greek War of Independence and the rise of the Greek Cypriot demand for *enosis* to unite Cyprus with Greece (Crawshaw, 2022).

Looking for protection against potential Russian aggression, Ottomans ceded the island's administration to Britain in 1878. Although the Greek (Cypriot) nationalism and the desire for *enosis* had already crystalized by that time (Keefe & Solsten, 1993), the Turkish (Cypriot) nationalism developed later when the younger generation of Turkish Cypriots adopted the Turkish nationalist ideology to struggle against *enosis* and ultimately unify a part of Cyprus with Turkey (Carpentier, 2017, p. 244). The *enosis* movement erupted into an anti-colonial armed rebellion with the Greek-nationalist and right-wing campaign of *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*[2] (EOKA) against British rule in 1955 (Keefe & Solsten, 1993). However, EOKA also targeted the Turkish Cypriots and the leftist Greek Cypriots in this process (Carpentier, 2017). The violence was further escalated with the formation of a Turkish Cypriot paramilitary organization, *Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı*[3] (TMT), in 1957 to counterbalance EOKA (Varnava, 2020). The anti-colonial struggles eventually led to the Zurich-London agreements in 1959, establishing the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) in 1960

[2] Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston translates to "National Organization of Cypriot Fighters" in English.
[3] Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı translates to "Turkish Resistance Organization" in English.

with Greece, Turkey, and the United Kingdom as guarantors. Despite initial peace, bicommunal violence resurfaced in December 1963.

The period of intense collective violence in 1963 and 1964 was followed by the de facto partition of the island with the "enclave period" (Morag, 2004), during which the two communities gradually drifted toward leading separate lives and "most Turkish Cypriots withdrew into fortified enclaves scattered over the island" (Carpentier, 2017, p. 215), and the establishment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus in 1964 (Keefe & Solsten, 1993). This, however, failed to prevent bicommunal fighting from erupting, and several violent confrontations occurred soon after that (e.g., the Battle of Tylliria), resulting in the Turkish fighter jets raid and the U.S. intervention to halt a full Turkish military operation (Mirbagheri, 2010). Following the 1964 escalation, violence has diminished to more sporadic eruptions even though it is not entirely nonexistent (Bose, 2007).

In 1967, the island reentered the influence of violence with attacks on the villages of Ayios Theodhoros and Kofinou, which triggered a severe crisis in Cyprus, and Greece and Turkey came to the brink of war (again). Turkey reacted to the attacks by mobilizing armed forces and issuing an ultimatum threatening direct military intervention to protect Turkish Cypriots (Keefe & Solsten, 1993). The 1967 crisis prompted the second U.S. diplomatic intervention and led to the withdrawal of unauthorized Greek military forces sent to Cyprus in response to potential Turkish military action after the 1963–1964 incidents. Additionally, Grivas,[4] who arrived on the island during the same period to become the supreme military commander, was repatriated (Bose, 2007). The establishment of the Turkish Cypriot Provisional Administration in December 1967 followed these renewed hostilities (Varnava, 2020). These developments opened up space for the Intercommunal Talks, which would later get stuck (Carpentier, 2017), further emphasizing the precarity of peace on the island.

The 1967 crisis brought together several implications worthy of noting. As Crawshaw (2022) argues, this crisis further indicated that "the National Guard increasingly identified itself with the Greek army and . . . doctrine of Enosis was extensively propagated by Greek officers from the mainland" (p. 373), which is under the right-wing dictatorship of the Regime of the Colonels, which seized power in 1967, shortly before the hostilities erupted in Cyprus. This further strengthened the Turkish Cypriots' identification with the claims of Turkish nationalism and their desire for a separatist solution, which was evident when most of the Turkish Cypriots remained in enclaves even after the Greek Cypriot blockade was lifted and preferred to stay with their "own people rather than the potential to enjoy a higher standard of living among the Greek Cypriots" (Morag, 2004, p. 601).

The Greek military junta heightened tensions in the Greek Cypriot community, materializing in a Greek-backed coup in Cyprus (Mirbagheri, 2010). Subsequently, Turkey's military intervention led to the occupation of one-third of the island and its partition into two ethnically (almost) homogeneous sectors. On November 15, 1983, the Turkish Cypriot community declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which lacks international recognition except from Turkey. The island remains divided, with the TRNC forming a de facto entity in the north and the legitimate administration of the RoC in the south, with a buffer zone guarded by the United Nations separating both.

[4] Georgios Grivas was the founder and leader of the Greek Cypriot paramilitary organizations EOKA and EOKA B.

A Brief Projection of the Discourse Theory

This research is grounded in Laclau and Mouffe's (2014) DT, a poststructuralist approach challenging the notion of natural foundations determining societal structures. DT views discourse from a macro-textual/-contextual standpoint (Carpentier, 2017), considering it a framework that provides meaning to social phenomena, emphasizing that discourse is more than language use, "it is a structure in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed" (Laclau, 1988, p. 254).

DT does not suggest that several meanings and various discourses are floating and that there is nothing but instability; contrarily, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) argue that "a discourse incapable of generating any fixity of meaning is the discourse of the psychotic" (p. 99). DT argues that discourses gain stability through articulation, a process in which signs acquire meaning by being fixated around key signifiers called nodal points. So, discursive structures are produced through articulation; in other words, discourse is "the structured totality [that has] resulted from the articulatory practice" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, p. 91).

DT argues that meaning can never reach a structural totality because social phenomena and their meanings are embedded in discursive struggles. Thus, permanent fixation becomes impossible because "every concrete fixation of the signs' meaning is contingent; it is possible but not necessary" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 25). Contingency originates from the vulnerability of discursive elements that can always be re-/dis-articulated. Moreover, alternative discourses can always undermine particular discourses and their hegemonic claims. Thus, discourse is "a precarious system" as it is always "subjected to political attempts to undermine and/or restructure the discursive context" (Torfing, 2005, p. 14).

Antagonism is a crucial mechanism bringing discursive stability. Antagonism involves the discursive identification and exclusion of others (Torfing, 2005). Thus, the excluded others become constitutive outsides and strengthen discourses by introducing clear insides and outsides. However, they simultaneously prevent these discourses from reaching full closure. Antagonism can also be found at another level, where discourses collide to achieve a hegemonic position (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Even when the establishment of hegemony concludes these struggles, this hegemony cannot be permanent, as other antagonisms can always reemerge.

Militarist Discourse

This research focuses on the construction of the militarist discourse, theorized by using the diverse theoretical frameworks that study militarism through the organization of a discourse-theoretical rereading of this literature. This rereading employs DT to make sense of the non-discourse-theoretical frameworks by reordering and reformulating them to align them with the discourse-theoretical approach of this study. Based on the discourse-theoretical rereading of the literature on militarism and in conceit with the empirical analysis, this article argues that the militarist discourse consists of four nodal points. These are (1) the army as a national protection assemblage, (2) obligated citizenship, (3) sanctity of sacrifice, and (4) the need for the destruction of the enemy. These nodal points and their theoretical foundations will be discussed in the following sections.

Four Nodal Points of the Militarist Discourse

Despite being considered equal to the army, militarism is not a synonym for the army and its inherent practices and values; instead, militarism is a specific formation of these values and practices (Belge, 2012). Militarism, in a glossary definition, is "an inversion of political end and military means in human politics" (Bucholz & Lalgee, 2008, p. 1218). Thus, while militarism is linked with military force, it is not exclusively limited to it. Taking up a broader definition, this study approaches militarism as a discourse, or, in Enloe's (2004) words, as "a package of ideas" (p. 219), providing meaning to social phenomena, rather than the conventional definitions explaining militarism as the political predominance of the ideals of the military class or merely an aggressive policy of military preparedness.

Militarist discourse adulates "practices and norms associated with militaries" (Chenoy, 1998, p. 101) as well as the military values, rules, perspectives, or ways of thinking and thus shapes the social and political structure (Parlak & Kaftan, 2016, p. 169). It aims to militarize societies and citizens to enable them to embrace the core values of the military. In this respect, militarization is "a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually . . . comes to depend for its well-being, on militaristic ideas" (Enloe, 2000, p. 3). Thus, militarism expands beyond the battlefields and populates the social sphere. Moreover, militarism concerns daily life more than the army as it elevates military institutions and methods above those of civilians' and brings military feelings, judgment, and behavior into the civilian sphere. As Enloe (2004) argues, militarism provides a set of assumptions about how the world works and brings together particular "assertions about what is good, right, proper and what is bad, wrong, and improper" (p. 219).

In the literature focusing on militarism, some researchers argue that militarism and nationalism are blended (Trauschweizer, 2018), intertwined (Altınay, 2004), and co-constitutive (Efthymiou, 2019). These definitions already imply the close relationship between militarism and nationalism, where the latter locates militarism in a privileged position to defend and secure the self against the enemies. Thus, the army as a national protection assemblage becomes evident as one of the nodal points around which the militarist discourse is articulated. Enloe (2004) argues that one of the core ideas of militarism is the belief that "having enemies is a natural condition" (p. 219). One early example of such an assumption can be found in the Hobbesian assertion that the natural condition of humanity is a state of "war of all against all" (Hobbes, 1998, p. 84), which also plays a foundational role in mainstream security politics, with which militarism is closely related. The nodal point of protection constructs the military as a guarantor of existence through its capacity to fight against the "natural" and "ever-present" threats. In return, militarism obscures the enemy (Parlak & Kaftan, 2016) so that the threat is everywhere and nowhere. This ambiguity socializes danger as a permanent fixture and inverses the military means into the end. Thuswise, death anxieties become institutionalized through the militarist discourse, and preparation for future wars embraces the social sphere as much as the military. Militarism accentuates that the world is a dangerous place and that there are naturally those who must be protected and those who must protect (Frühstück, 2017) and emphasizes the necessity of military power with its core concepts (i.e., army, weaponry, hierarchy, discipline, and courage) for protection. In the context of the Cyprus Problem, the nodal point of the army as a national protection assemblage intersects with one of the foundational myths of Turkish (Cypriot) nationalism: *Ordu-millet* [military nation] (Altınay, 2004). The concept of the military nation is based on the idea that "every Turk is born a soldier," and it expects

the ones who say "I am a Turk"[5] to identify with this foundational characteristic of Turks. In this way, militarist discourse articulates bellicosity as a part of the nation as well as the army and, thus, enables the members of the community (or citizens) to be auxiliaries of the army assemblage.

A second nodal point of the militarist discourse is obligated citizenship. Militarist discourse articulates military values as a means of achieving social order and welfare. In this respect, militarism is closely related to citizenship as it often attempts to define the rules and roles of citizens, aims to discipline them accordingly, and develops a hierarchical relationship among citizens. Equipping the individual with military values from childhood, militarism takes the military out of the military and makes it a way of life (Belge, 2012). Individuals are often invited to believe that these values are common to all and to act in the light of these values for the common good. Thus, the militarist discourse articulates the subject position of a citizen with a series of discursive elements, such as discipline and standardization, with an emphasis on sanctity and death, national and cultural values, incumbency, and circumspectness. Also, militarism is often articulated with the concept of the nation-state and affirms collective violence while normalizing death and bloodshed, legitimizing and even sanctifying death and killing for the nation(-state). Militarist discourse functions in dual modes. First, it turns war resulting from temporary anomie carried out only by soldiers fighting with cannons and rifles on the battlefield into a continuous action in which citizens actively participate in an organized and disciplined way in the most private areas of society. Second, it fills the citizens with a militaristic spirit of citizenship even in the absence of war. This is in line with the idea of participation in the war on the home front, where every activity becomes important in terms of the efforts for existent and potential wars (Collins, 2011). This articulation of obligated citizenship is often supported through education. National education is seen to provide a platform for the formation of these children as future citizens (Millei & Imre, 2016); the schooling system inculcates the values of citizenship, such as diligence, self-improvement, and commitment to responsibilities toward society (Rose, 1999).

Another nodal point of the articulation of the militarist discourse is the sanctity of sacrifice. The nodal point of sanctity is combined with a series of discursive elements: Valor, sacrifice, martyrdom, and love for country and nation. This articulation of militarism consecrates the military, the mechanism for violence, through heroism and bravery, normalizes its violent functions, and puts the militarist values and practices (e.g., dying/killing for country and nation) beyond the realm of questions. Militarism constructs the national signifiers, such as the homeland, the national flag, and the nation, as symbols of sacred love and values to be sacrificed for (Durusoy, 2016). In return, militarist discourse legitimizes violence through martyrdom, which is based on the belief that the ones who sacrifice their lives without hesitation will remain immortal and even be honored in the eyes of God. Thus, all citizens, whether military or civilian, should be willing to be martyrs for the sake of the survival of the nation and the state (Parlak & Kaftan, 2016). Militarist discourse often commemorates the examples of (self-)sacrifices with praise. It thus frames the social space with a military mentality in a way that expects similar sacrifices from all citizens (Parlak & Kaftan, 2016).

[5] "How happy is the one who says I am a Turk" is a motto of the Turkish Republic and is seen to be the definition of what it means to be a Turkish citizen.

The last nodal point of the militarist discourse is the need for the destruction of the enemy. In the militarist discourse, the signifier of the enemy is seen as having a crucial role. Militarist discourse directly or indirectly associates all problems with security and first resorts to force in solving problems (Öztan, 2014). Therefore, certain preparations are necessary not only in wartime but also in the absence of war to be able to withstand current and potential dangers. Because when surrounded by the enemy, there will be no other option but to use force (Öztan, 2014). To legitimize the use of force, enemy construction is initially necessary. As Keen (1986) writes, "In the beginning, we create the enemy. Before the weapon comes into the image. We think others to death and then invent the battle-axe or the ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them" (p. 10). The enemy is the other, outside the dominant idea and the world of meaning it constructs (Fairclough, 2003). In other words, the enemy functions as the constitutive outside that brings clear insides and outsides to strengthen the militarist discourse. Thus, the enemy is set to have a dichotomous role against the self, which is mainly based on the opposition of good and evil. In militarist discourse, the enemy is constructed through dehumanization and demonization practices as brutal and inhumane, and, in return, militarism emphasizes that the enemy deserves to be destructed and how important it is to destroy it (Durusoy, 2016). Also, it is impossible to predict when the enemy will attack or what kind of atrocities they will commit, so one must always be ready to destroy the enemy when the opportunity arises. However, the total destruction of the enemy is ultimately impossible as the presence of the enemy is a crucial factor that militarist discourse needs to maintain its hegemonic position.

Data and Methodology

This research centers on a particular Turkish Cypriot children's magazine, *Tuncer*, published between December 1965 and November 1970. The scarcity of Turkish Cypriot children's magazines in Cyprus is evident, with only one precedent, *Çocuk Dergisi* [Children's Magazine], initiated by the Cyprus Education Department and circulated free of charge from 1954 to 1961. In contrast, *Tuncer* emerged as among the earliest privately produced children's magazines although it was still subject to official supervision from the Turkish Education Department. It was printed at *Halkın Sesi* Printing House in Nicosia and sold at a price of 25 mil. The magazine comprised content such as editor-authored articles and poems, translations, contributions from educators, student-created drawings and poems, quizzes, serialized stories, and a multitude of advertisements.

The proprietor of *Tuncer* was Ergin Birinci, born in 1940 in Paphos, Cyprus. After his university education in Turkey, he returned to Cyprus and worked as a primary school teacher. After leaving teaching in 1968 to pursue business ventures, Birinci worked for various newspapers. He later owned various newspapers and operated a printing house (Dedeçay, 1989). As Dedeçay (1989) notes, Birinci articulated his rationale for establishing *Tuncer* in response to the absence of a children's magazine following the discontinuation of *Çocuk Dergisi*. To address this void, Birinci and fellow educators published three school magazines: *Tuncer*, for fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students and published from December 1965 to November 1970; *Öğrenci* [Student], for second- and third-grade students and published from November 1965 to May 1968; and *Minik Kardeş* [Little Sibling] for first-grade students and published from September 1968 to May 1969. After the closure of the other two, *Tuncer* expanded its scope to encompass students from all grades. Of these three magazines, *Tuncer* was the most widely circulated, with 5,000 copies, followed by *Öğrenci* with 3,000 and *Minik Kardeş* with 2,000 (Dedeçay, 1989). In addition to these, there

was another children's magazine published in this period, *Okul*. Owned by two teachers, Çağatay Hasan and Necdet Mustafa, *Okul* was published in two separate editions for seniors and juniors.

After the initial analysis of the landscape of children's magazines within the selected period, 14 issues of *Tuncer* published between January 1967 and December 1968 were selected for analysis. The selection of these magazines was guided by three criteria: (1) circulation rate, (2) historical relevance, and (3) current availability. Circulation rate, denoting the number of issues distributed, was a significant factor. *Tuncer* was distinguished from the others, ensuring broad dissemination, reaching up to 5,000 issues and employing a subscription mechanism. The selection also prioritized the historical context; consequently, magazines produced before and after the selected period were excluded. Last, the availability of magazines influenced the selection, with those lost or unarchived being excluded. After thorough research in Cyprus and Turkey, including using resources such as the National Archives in Kyrenia, the National Library in Nicosia, various university libraries (e.g., Near East University, Eastern Mediterranean University), the National Library in Ankara, and individual collectors and journal publishers, *Tuncer* was seen to be the most consistently published and most available magazine. Although other magazines in this period were also accessible to some degree, the number of available copies was quite limited, and thus, they were excluded from the selection. In adherence to these criteria, *Tuncer*, from a choice of four Turkish Cypriot children's magazines, with its 14 issues published in the selected period, was chosen for analysis. Table 1 shows the overview of selected issues.

Table 1. Overview of the Selected Issues.

Tuncer		
Date	**Volume**	**Issue**
January 1967	2	4
February 1967	2	5
April 1967	2	6
May 1967	2	7
September 1967	3	1
November 1967	3	2
December 1967	3	3
January 1968	3	4
February 1968	3	5
March 1968	3	6
April 1968	3	7
May 1968	3	8
October 1968	4	1
December 1968	4	2

As discussed before, the period of 1967–1968 was purposefully selected because of its historical significance in the course of the Cyprus Problem. In this period, the island witnessed intensive collective violence; Turkish Cypriots further withdrew into enclaves scattered over the island, which resulted in the

material segregation of both communities. This enclavement contributed to the further deterioration of bicommunal relations. As Morag (2004) argues, the "congestion and tension within the Turkish Cypriot enclaves led to an externalization of tensions within the community and an exaggeration of national unity, with the authorities constantly reinforcing the belief that the Greek Cypriots were a serious threat" (p. 601). The analyzed material is deeply embedded in these discursive constructions, heavily reflecting the Turkish Cypriot perspective and even propagandizing it.

The selected issues of this children's magazine were analyzed using DTA, which is a method operationalizing DT by bridging it with qualitative research methodology, through the activation of the methodological tool of the sensitizing concepts. Thus, central to DTA is the use of sensitizing concepts drawn from DT and external theoretical frameworks, which guides the analysis without prematurely limiting it. The core sensitizing concept in DTA is the concept of discourse, complemented by other discourse-theoretical notions, such as the nodal point concept, alongside sensitizing concepts linked to the construction of militarism and conflict. The theoretical framework, along with its sensitizing concepts, is concurrently developed with the empirical analysis, avoiding the imposition of theory on the analysis. This approach is reflected in the coding and categorization process, aligning with Saldaña's (2013) model, where the gradual development of structure and abstraction in empirical categories aligns with the evolution of the theoretical framework. The initial coding cycle involved creating an analytical model based on sensitizing concepts from the first theoretical reflection and literature review, subsequently transformed into a coding tree through successive cycles, representing a structured hierarchy of all codes enriched by ongoing theory development. Given the visual elements in the analyzed material, multimodal analysis techniques complement DTA, enabling the examination of various communicative modes and their interactions, as advocated by Kress (2010).

Analysis of the Militarist Discourse in the Selected Material

The selected issues of this children's magazine are deeply embedded in the Turkish Cypriot perspective on the Cyprus Problem; thus, they contain a particular articulation of the militarist discourse. In all the issues, the Turkish Cypriots, together with the Turkish nation and army, are seen as constructions of the self. Within this context, and in line with the Turkish (Cypriot) nationalist discourse, the Greek Cypriots and Greeks become articulated as the enemy. The Greek Cypriots are, in most cases, reduced to Greekness. So, their Cypriotness is often neglected or denied. In other words, the articulations of the other/enemy are often totalizing and reductionist in the construction of its identity. In this sense, the plurality of the other/enemy and its diversity becomes eliminated, and they are replaced by the homogenized articulation of "Greek."

In the following parts, this article will provide an analysis of how the militarist discourse is articulated around the nodal points of (1) the army as a national protection assemblage, (2) obligated citizenship, (3) sanctity of sacrifice, and (4) the need for the destruction of the enemy, and the particularities of these nodal points within the context of the Cyprus Problem.

The first nodal point, the army as a national protection assemblage, features in almost all of the analyzed material, which, in turn, has a series of discursive elements. The first element is the

omnipresence of threat, based on the assumption that the world is a dangerous place, which becomes even more evident in the context of the Cyprus Problem. For instance, the poem in the fifth issue refers to the discursive element of the omnipresence of threat by saying, "The Turks were disappearing one by one. We would have disappeared unannounced. Everyone complained about the enemy everywhere" (Ali, 1967, p. 14). Emphasizing the ever-present threat, this excerpt conveys a sense of silent danger, reinforcing the notion of a continuous, lurking threat and potential confrontations, and further amplifies the omnipresent nature of the perceived threat, suggesting a pervasive sense of danger that transcends specific locations. The discursive element of the omnipresence of threat also becomes visible through more institutional voices, when, for example, Fazıl Küçük (1968), the president of the Provisional Turkish Administration and vice president, addresses the Turkish Cypriot children, saying, the mujahideen[6] "are unremittingly keeping watch all over the island . . . on the mountain tops, in muddy positions" (p. 4). The mujahideen's unremitting watch all over the island emphasizes the perpetual nature of their vigilance, aligning with the notion of an ever-present threat that necessitates continuous surveillance and protection. The discursive element of the omnipresence of threat also becomes visible in the head of the Education Department Şemsi Kazım's (1968) address to the Turkish Cypriot children, saying, "Your mujahid brothers have been fighting for four years in the trenches in every corner of Cyprus, . . . to protect the . . . existence and survival of the Turkish Cypriots" (p. 7).

The omnipresence of threat often triggers death anxieties, which is another discursive element of the first nodal point. This discursive element becomes visible, particularly with references to the past. The editorial in the fourth issue ("Şehitler Günü," 1968), for example, reminds the readers of the "terrible days" and "the murderous enemy" against whom "Turkish Cypriots fought at the cost of their lives" (p. 3). The analyzed material also includes frequent references to the ones who lost their lives, the "martyred" mujahideen, and the Turkish Cypriots. Although death anxieties are sometimes implied by the "lost hopes" (Süleyman, 1967, p. 15), the militarized childhood always prevails with its "willingness to die for the nation" (Ahmet, 1968, p. 11), as seen in the fifth issue. This already implies the sacrifice, which is also one of the nodal points of the militarist discourse, discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Another discursive element of the articulation of the army as a national protection assemblage is the (para-)military as the guarantor of the existence of the nation. This often mobilizes two military positions, namely the mujahideen and *Mehmetçik*,[7] which become apparent in the analyzed material. In an editorial from the seventh issue ("Türk Askeri-Türk Mücahidi," 1968), for instance, *Mehmetçik* and mujahideen are articulated as the protectors "made of steel, strength of spirit and love of country" (p. 9). The articulation of the army as a national protection assemblage is seen to be reflected also in the texts written by children; for example, *Mehmetçik* and mujahid are articulated as "a fortress against the enemy" that will "hit the enemies" and bring peace to Cyprus (Tevfik, 1968, p. 11).

The last discursive element of this nodal point is the myth of military nation, which, as a significant component of Turkish (Cypriot) nationalism, portrays the military as the foundational characteristic of the community rather than a state-related institution and enables the members of the

[6] "Mujahid" refers to the Turkish Cypriot irregular fighting forces; plural: mujahideen.

[7] Mehmetçik is a term that refers affectionately to Turkish soldiers.

community to become natural components of the (para-)military. In the material, we see the military nation myth; for example, in an editorial letter ("Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayramı," 1967), the Turkish Cypriot children are invited to assume the position of mujahideen as the foundation of the Turkish (Cypriot) national existence:

> Pure child of Cyprus, follow the path of your mujahid father and brother . . . One day, you will be the flag bearer of the struggle. You, who constitute the keystone of the Turkish national existence, will grow up as having a national character. (p. 4)

The recognition of the military nation myth is seen to be prevalent among the readers as well. The analyzed material, containing numerous texts from readers, indicates that the audience frequently identifies with militarized childhood. For example, a fifth-grade student writes, "My ancestry is Turk. I am a little mujahid, and I swear to God, I will give my life happily for my nation" (Ahmet, 1968, p. 11). In another example, a sixth-grade student writes, "I want to become a soldier and take my revenge on the enemy. I want to fight like my ancestors. I want to become either a Ghazi or a martyr on this land" (Muhtaroğlu, 1968, p. 21).

The second nodal point of the militarist discourse is obligated citizenship, where we can find the discursive elements of discipline and obedience, self-improvement, and the hierarchical relationship among citizens. The elements of discipline and obedience are seen to be related to education in school and in the family, where children, as future citizens, are not only educated and disciplined but also expected to obey orders without objection. An example of this can be found in an editorial ("Çalışan Kazanır," 1967) that defines laziness as a "mental illness" and explains that "doing the things your parents ordered you to do at home without objection" is one of the ways to avoid such illness (p. 3). As indicated here, inertia is juxtaposed with being mentally ill, implying that it hinders national progress; furthermore, it proposes a solution, which is seen to be articulated as obedience to adults' guidance. The element of discipline and obedience is further exemplified in Küçük's (1968) address to Turkish Cypriot children, saying, "You see closely how your fathers and brothers defend this land that is yours as an eternal legacy. What is expected of you is to work and work alone and to obey the orders of your teachers and parents" (p. 4).

The articulation of militarism with obligated citizenship positions children as part of a consciously designed pursuit of national interest, which includes the necessity of self-improvement. Again, national education has a crucial role in this articulation. In the fifth issue, for example, the importance of school and self-improvement are emphasized as follows: "Students who do not know why they go to school can never be useful to their nation when they grow up. You should always strive to reach better" ("Neler Yapabiliriz," 1967, p. 3). The element of self-improvement as a part of civic duty is seen to be identified with diligence, which measures up to other nationalist/militarist values such as valor and defensiveness. This is apparent in the following excerpt: "The Turkish nation is brave and protective. However, these are not enough; it is also necessary to be hardworking" ("Çalışan Kazanır," 1967, p. 3). Another element of this nodal point is the hierarchical relationship among citizens. This can be seen in the editors' interview ("Örnek Sınıf, Örnek Öğrenci," 1967) with a "model student," who is called "provost" by his teachers and friends, and he is responsible for bringing the other students in line and maintaining order in the school.

As these examples indicate, the second nodal point of the militarist discourse, namely obligated citizenship, encompasses the discursive elements of discipline, obedience, self-improvement, and

hierarchical relationships among citizens. These elements often emphasize that children, as future citizens, must not only be educated and disciplined but also unquestioningly follow orders. This nodal point is closely linked to Turkish (Cypriot) nationalism and positions children as active contributors to the national interest, intertwining militarism with civic values and necessitating continuous self-improvement. This nodal point also equates self-improvement with diligence, aligning it with other nationalist and militarist values like defensiveness and hierarchy. Thus, this nodal point not only indoctrinates children into militarist values but also reinforces their role as integral contributors to the nation's welfare.

The third nodal point of the militarist discourse is the sanctity of sacrifice, which taps into a series of discursive elements such as valor, sacrifice, and martyrdom and love for country and nation. The element of valor emphasizes the bravery of not only the soldiers/mujahideen but also the noncombatant individuals. The element of valor represents the ideal "Turkishness," which shows how to embody the ideals of the Turkish nation. In the analyzed material, the heroism of the self is often referred to; for instance, in an editorial in the sixth issue ("Çanakkale Zaferi," 1968) referring to the "valor of Turkish soldiers against enemies" (p. 1), in an article in the fourth issue (Hazım, 1968) about "the bravery of the soldier who shot a truck and killed a lot of enemies with his last bullet" (p. 14), and in a story in the first issue ("Kahraman Türk Kadınları," 1968) about a Turkish woman "who fought against the enemies with her chopping knife" (p. 21). The element of valor is not only articulated with the idealized imaginary soldier "who has an unbent neck and is as strong as the mountains" (Yusuf, 1967, p. 14) but also in the stories of past wars, which is, for example, visible in a story ("Çanakkale Zaferi," 1968) about the Dardanelles Campaign:

> One of the bloodiest battles in history took place that day. Turkish soldiers attacked the enemy in waves. Examples of bravery and heroism were given. . . . The victory of March 18 is the most precious ornament of the history pages. (p. 3)

Valor, however, is not exclusive to adults or soldiers; it is also a value that the "future soldiers" are expected to take up. For example, a cub scout (Ertürk, 1967) writes, "I'm a cub scout. When I grow up, I will be a soldier. . . . I will keep watch in my homeland. I will shield my chest against the enemy. Then I will be happy" (p. 14).

As can be seen in this example, valor sometimes overlaps with other discursive elements, such as sacrifice and martyrdom for the sake of the homeland, which are also apparent in the following poem: "We fight for Cyprus, and we die. We are never afraid of death. Among the other heroes, my father was also martyred, Cyprus for you" (Kemal, 1968a, p. 7). The element of martyrdom is particularly strong in the texts. However, it also refers to the material dimensions of the militarist discourse, as, for example, can be seen in Figure 1 from the fourth issue. The element of martyrdom becomes materialized through commemoration practices, which, in turn, attempt to naturalize and sediment the militarist discourse.

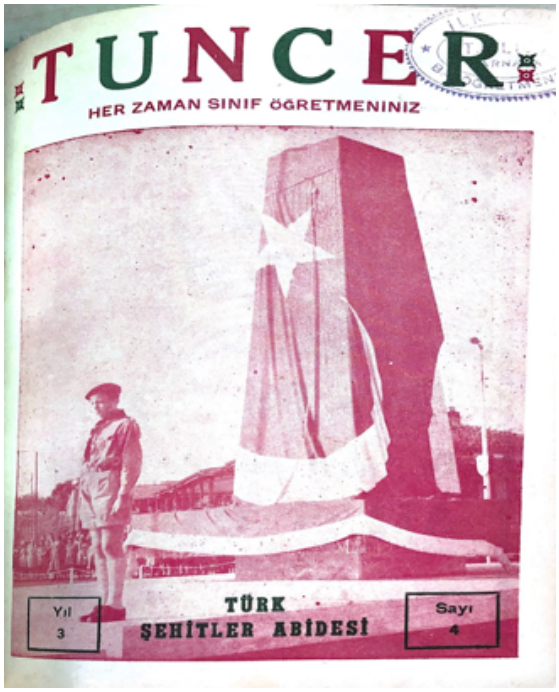

Figure 1. Monument to Turkish martyrs. Source: Cover of Tuncer (January 1968, volume 3, issue 4).

Figure 1 reveals a complex interplay of symbols that converges around the central theme of the sanctity of sacrifice. The primary visual elements involve a scout boy positioned prominently in the foreground, flanked by two potent symbols of the militarist discourse. First, the national flag takes a prominent position, signifying its sanctity as a symbol deeply intertwined with the ethos of the army. The flag serves not only as a representation of the nation but, in this context, also becomes an embodiment of sacred values associated with military service. Additionally, the monument to martyrs stands tall in the background, reinforcing the element of sacrifice through its commemoration of the heroism shown by mujahideen and the members Turkish Cypriot community. The juxtaposition of the scout boy with these symbols suggests a deliberate construction, linking the youth to the foundational principles of national defense and sacrifice. This reflects an ideological underpinning that seeks to convey the sanctity and reverence surrounding the military, reinforcing a particular set of ideals about duty, heroism, and the sacrificial ethos within the broader societal context. The visual elements, in conjunction with each other, construct a military discourse that reinforces and perpetuates a specific ideological framework associated with militarism and sacrifice within the cultural and national narrative.

The last nodal point of the militarist discourse is the need for the destruction of the enemy, which is deeply linked to the discursive construction of the other. The enemy is always in a dichotomous relationship with the self; thus, it is often radically demonized and dehumanized. One example of the dehumanized enemy is visible in the sixth issue: "O fearless Mujahideen . . . If the doggish enemy attacks, you will immediately prevent it. You protect us from them" (Kemal, 1968b, p. 7). The negative articulation

of the enemy is not limited to this, and the enemy is also seen to be constructed as barbarous, inhumane, and perfidious. In the analyzed material, the enemy is always constructed as the Greek. In concordance with the enemy/other position, the Greek is constructed as an intruder and a traitor to be destroyed. For example, the following poem (Hüseyin, 1968) articulates Greeks (Cypriots) as existing in Cyprus unrightfully and asks them to leave the island: "O bloody Greek! What rights do you have on this island? Get out of my country! . . . What is this barbarism in you? A murrain on you! Get lost!" (p. 10).

The damnation of the enemy eventually turns into the desire to totally destroy the enemy, and sometimes, reductionist practices go further; for example, the militarist discourse reduces the enemy to *palikaria*, which refers to young Greek military men who fought against the Ottomans during the Greek War of Independence. In turn, the enemy takes up the role of the ever-existing trouble with historical connotations, which needs to be destroyed. A Turkish Cypriot child (Fadıl, 1967) addresses the "treacherous, barbarous *palikaria*" and asks, "What rights do you have on this island? Did you give eighty thousand martyrs and hundreds of mujahideen for this land? *Palikaria*, this island is ours" (p. 14). The term *palikaria* is accompanied by the pejorative adjective "treacherous barbarian," which immediately sets a negative tone and implies betrayal and uncivilized behavior. The rhetorical question posed serves as a tool to challenge the legitimacy of the Greek Cypriots' presence on the island and implies that the Greek Cypriots have no rightful claim or authority over the land. This, in turn, reinforces the idea that the island belongs exclusively to the Turkish Cypriots, framing the Greek Cypriots as intruders or invaders. Furthermore, the historical references to the Turks' sacrifices evoke a sense of historical struggle and martyrdom, positioning the Turks as the rightful owners while strategically weaving the argument against the presence of the Greek Cypriots. Moreover, the repetitive use of the term *palikaria* serves to dehumanize and stereotype the Greek Cypriots by reinforcing a negative image of traitors and barbarians, ultimately aiming to legitimize the need for their destruction.

The enemy is sometimes reduced to individuals, as, for example, seen in the case of Grivas and Makarios,[8] and the enemy is dehumanized and demonized in the persona of these figures who need to be destroyed in the end:

> Coward, treacherous Grivas. . . . One day, you will kneel before us; you will be a fly in our eyes. Your accomplice Makarios . . . Why is he hiding in the holes? The rope will pass through his throat, for the dogs to be fed. We will not forget the Geçitkale incidents. Our hatred will increase. These two Greek cowards will not be able to escape the beating of the Turks. (Bilal, 1968, p. 14)

The punishment of the enemy is sometimes praised and materialized on national days, where the self always punishes or destroys the enemy as a representation of militarist desire, as, for example, can be seen in Figure 2.

[8] Makarios III was a Greek Cypriot Archbishop of Cyprus, who served as the first president of RoC.

Figure 2. Little mujahideen punish the enemy. Source: **Tuncer** ***(April 1967, volume 2, issue 6, p. 1).***

The complex symbolization in Figure 2 unfolds around the nodal point of the need for the destruction of the enemy. The visual components intricately bring together four strategically placed key elements. The focal point is the depiction of a young mujahid holding an automatic rifle and another, the Turkish flag. Here, the act of wielding a weapon signifies empowerment and agency, while the Turkish flag conveys a potent symbol of national identity and allegiance. Surrounding this central imagery, the enemies are portrayed kneeling and raising their hands in a gesture of surrender, symbolizing the submission and defeat of the perceived threat. The intentional framing of the enemies in this vulnerable position serves as a visual representation of the desired destruction of the enemy/other, reinforcing the idea of triumph and dominance. Crucially, the Turkish flag waving above them functions as a powerful visual metaphor, signaling the establishment of military and national superiority over the defeated enemy. This emblematic display communicates not only a narrative of military conquest but also the imposition of ideological superiority, where the enemy is compelled to accept the perceived superiority of the self. This visual representation, constructed through the careful arrangement of visual elements, reinforces the idea of military prowess, national dominance, and the imperative for the ultimate destruction of the enemy/other that is perceived as a threat.

Conclusion

The Cyprus Problem deeply permeated the societal fabric, leading to the internalization of war and military institutions. Within this context, the analyzed issues of the children's magazine *Tuncer* offer a

particular construction of militarism, which shapes (and is shaped by) this armed conflict, activates the militarist discourse as part of an ongoing nationalist struggle, legitimizes the Turkish (Cypriot) side's (para-)military actions as pure self-defense, and most importantly incites, suppresses, and molds childhood to embrace militarism and war.

This analysis demonstrated the presence of four nodal points around which the militarist discourse was constructed and fixated. This context also brings in a series of internal conflations, where, for instance, the sacrifice nodal point becomes articulated with citizenship, which paradoxically puts the individuals' lives in jeopardy by including them in the army assemblage, which simultaneously claims to exist to protect their lives. It is also important to note that the articulations of the nodal points differ depending on the political needs. In the Turkish Cypriot case, for example, love for country and nation and sacrificing one's life for their sake are represented as a commitment to the good, while Greek Cypriots are not allowed to have such traits.

Moreover, these articulations produce a series of ruptures regarding childhood. Children often take contradictory positions where they are both denied and granted agency. On the one hand, they are articulated as cherubs often victimized by the enemy; on the other, they are articulated as (potential) combatants invited to defend the homeland against the enemy. Thus, the militarist discourse manifests childhood to be protected from combat, whereas it renders combatant children (both representatively and literally) taking action against the enemy. It is worth noting that these tensions also show the constructed nature of childhood and highlight the instabilities of discursive structures. Moreover, the analysis shows that the militarist discourse expects children to have differing roles at the same time, even if these expectations are often contradictory.

This analysis also highlighted the significant role of children's media in disseminating and reinforcing the hegemonic claims of the militarist and nationalist discourses within this context. Despite the professed educational goals of the analyzed material aimed at aiding children in navigating challenges in school life, the analysis points to their contribution to the expansion of the militarist discourse and even the propagation of its claims. Moreover, this analysis suggests that Turkish Cypriot children, as consumers of this magazine, tend to internalize the ideals of the militarized childhood and even identify with them. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the analyzed material, subject to "selection" and "control" mechanisms before publication, only reveals the specificity of the militarist discourse within the analyzed content and its contextual limitations, thus cautioning against overgeneralization.

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